

ADJUTANT AND INSPECTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Richmond, February 23, 1863.

GENERAL ORDERS, }
No. 22. }

The following additional instructions are published for the guidance of the medical officers and surgeons composing the Boards of Examination for conscripts:

I. In their examination of conscripts, they must exercise a sound and firm discretion, and not yield their judgment in favor of every complaint of trivial disability, by attaching too much importance to which, they indirectly favor evasions of the required military service.

II. As a general rule, it may be received that where a conscript is equal to all the active duties of the various occupations of civil life, he is able to discharge the duties of a soldier.

III. Temporary exemption is so liable to abuse, and to be resorted to as a means of evasion, that the examining surgeon must fix the period for which it is granted (which, with the reasons therefor, will be stated in the monthly report); at the expiration of which period, the conscript must present himself for examination, or be considered absent without leave.

IV. The following are some of the grounds not deemed sufficient and satisfactory for exemption:

1. *General debility.*—The grades of this condition are numerous, and on receiving them all as grounds for exemption, the examining surgeon cannot be considered as discharging his duty to the service. In arriving at a correct judgment upon this point, he will be aided by the consideration, that observation has by no means established that a so called high standard of health is best adapted to encounter the exposures of military life, such physical condition being especially liable to disease; while health of a lower grade, without any coexisting positive disease, is frequently strengthened and improved by the exposures incident to the life of a soldier.

2. In case of *slight deformity*, natural, or the result of accident and irregular union of fractures, unless material impairment of power and motion results from such deformity, the conscripts must be held liable for military service.

3. *Deafness*.—This is not a valid reason for exemption, unless so excessive (which must be stated in the monthly report) as to incapacitate a man for the duties of a sentinel. The fact of its existence must also be established by the affidavit of a respectable physician, who has known the conscript to be the subject of the infirmity.

4. *Impediment of speech*—Unless of a very aggravated character, is not a valid reason for exemption.

5. *Heart disease (organic)*.—Organic disease of the heart being comparatively infrequent, the physical and rational signs should be scrutinized with great care, and the subject of examination should not be excused unless the case is satisfactorily established.

6. *Functional disturbance of heart's action*.—This is very common—not a valid ground for exemption, and will generally be relieved by change to the life of the camp.

7. *Rheumatism*.—The kind should be designated, whether acute or chronic, articular or muscular. It is a complaint liable to be used as a means of evasion. Where it is simply muscular, without swelling or contraction of the joints, and the general health of the conscript is otherwise sound, he should be held liable to military duty.

8. *Epilepsy*.—This disease being frequently simulated, so as to impose upon a careless observer, nothing less than the observation of an actual paroxysm, or the affidavit of a responsible physician acquainted with the conscript, should be deemed satisfactory by the examining surgeon.

9. *Varicocele*—Not a ground for exemption, unless excessive; which must be stated in the monthly report.

10. *Myopia*—Not a ground for exemption. Many myopic subjects distinguish distant objects with accuracy sufficient for all practical purposes.

11. *Hemorrhoids*.—As many invalids in civil life, subjects of this disorder, are engaged in active occupations, they should not, unless excessive (which must be stated in the monthly reports), be considered satisfactory grounds for exemption.

12. *Opacity of one cornea, or the loss of one eye*—Not valid grounds for exemption.

13. *The loss of one or two fingers*—Not sufficient cause for exemption.

14. *Single reducible hernia*—Not a valid cause for exemption.

By order.

S. COOPER,
Adjutant and Inspector General